

letters

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To the Editorial Board

In last week's Integrator, there was an editorial printed which strongly criticized the actions of Bill Darling (Senator '77) and Frank Truatt (WNTC Station Manager). At this time, I wish to make a rebuttal to that editorial.

First of all, many of the Board's facts are wrong. For instance:

1. The news release in question was aired once and only once, not continuously, as stated previously. The time of the airing was 7:40 p.m., not between 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

2. The release was aired solely because Senator John Grasso called Mr. Truatt and requested that it be aired as a personal favor to the senator.

3. The station manager has the final say about any and all announcements, no matter what type, that are to be put over on his station. The news director must abide by the manager's decision, unless he feels it is important enough to call for a vote of the ICRN Board on the subject.

4. By inspection, the definitions of 'news' and 'publicity' are obviously almost the same; indeed, the definition of publicity states that it is "information with a news value." The office of Publicity Director of Senate was set up to handle both.

5. Since Mr. Darling is the publicity director of Senate, it is his job to approve all items written for future release by anyone in Senate. Since Mr. Grasso did not obtain Mr. Darling's approval before issuing his news release, and since he had every opportunity to ask Mr. Darling for it after the emergency meeting, it can only be concluded that Mr. Darling was deliberately bypassed so that he would be unable to object until after the release had been broadcast.

6. Since Mr. Grasso asked Mr. Truatt to air the release as a personal favor, it must also be concluded that the senator had something to gain by it. Upon examining the release again, I believe it will be evident to everyone what that something is. In my experience, it has usually been referred to as "blowing one's own horn."

7. As a final statement, the Board quotes Article IV, Section 5 of the CCSA constitution: "The Senate shall not have the power to specify or change the editorial policy of any Clarkson student publication or radio station." I have only one thing to say about this. We're not talking about editorial policy; we're talking about an illegal news release. This quote and the accompanying admonition to Senate are therefore completely irrelevant to this discussion.

In light of the above facts, and the resulting conclusions from them, it is my opinion that Senator Darling acted in an entirely proper manner when he ordered the news release pulled, and that there was no censorship of any kind involved in the action.

One question, if I may. Why does the Board need me to point out its mistakes? After the news release was aired, the board had three whole days to interview all the concerned parties and find out the true story before the Integrator's publication deadline. Why was this not done? Why, instead, did the Board attack Mr. Truatt and Senator Darling, operating as it was on the flimsiest of bases? This seems to me to be extremely poor editorial policy on the Board's part (Polite version). In most circles this is known as "irresponsible journalism." I respectfully suggest that the Board "shape up" in order to prevent a recurrence of this sort in the future.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,
Jonathan K. Scheffter
News Director
WNTC Radio

To the Editorial Board:

This letter is in reply to the editorial in your last issue, in which you criticized myself and Bill Darling.

My first question is on how you can write an editorial as you did, without consulting either one of us. Both Bill and myself were available for questions, and would have been more than happy to give you the correct facts. Unfortunately, since you didn't bother to, I am now forced to set you straight.

At approximately 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 11, I received a call at WNTC studios from Senator John Grasso. He informed me that he had a news release he would like to have aired at WNTC. After making sure that there was nothing slanderous or obscene in his news release, I gave my personal approval to air it. At approximately 7:40 p.m., it was aired once, and only once, not continuously between 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. as stated in your article. Seeing no need to air it further since the message Mr. Grasso asked to have aired was, the release was filed. There was no censorship involved.

Dennis Greci, the news director for ICRN, phoned to tell me to remove the release from the air and reprimanded me for airing it. Mr. Greci was under the false impression that he had the authority to give me orders. According to the ICRN constitution, I have the final say as to what does or does not go over the air. As everyone knows, there is no two-thirds vote of the ICRN executive board necessary when I make a decision, which is also contrary to what was said last week. Dennis came down to the station with Mr. Grasso and reached an agreement on the content of the news release. He was also good enough to give me his approval on it, albeit a totally useless one.

As I stated earlier, since the release was aired, there was no need to air it again, since the point had already been made. Later that evening, Bill phoned and told me to remove the release. I informed him that he also had no authority to do that. He then phoned again a few minutes later, after checking to see whether he did in fact have the authority. He came up with no answer, but then asked me if I would remove the article anyway, because it was a false statement. I informed him that I did not know of the falsity of the statement, and that I had no intention of airing it any further anyway. I state once again that I believe there was absolutely no censorship by any of the parties involved.

I am shocked and disappointed that a college newspaper as good as the Integrator could be would print an article such as last week's, without trying to find out what really happened. I only wish that such a gross mistake will not happen in the future.

Sincerely yours,
Frank R. Truatt
Station Manager
WNTC Radio

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As one of the persons who organized Junior Weekend I feel that a few points should be made clear. The Junior Class had been holding planning meetings since September. These meetings were announced and only a few people attended. As the meetings progressed the plans for the weekend were formulated. We then went ahead to make the necessary arrangements. Everything went smoothly and, as the weekend approached, our publicity campaign was launched.

Within twenty-four hours of the start of Junior Weekend we were confronted with a charge of sex discrimination presented by a few students. Even though our publicity was out well before November eleventh, no one made an attempt to register a complaint at a class meeting.

An emergency Senate meeting was called to decide if our pricing policy should be changed. The Senate voted overwhelmingly to take no action to alter the pricing policy for our weekend, although it was established that a new policy would be considered at the next meeting. As a junior class senator and an organizer of Junior Weekend I can say that the Senate made the right decision. The weekend organizers formulated policy to try to do what was best for the Junior Class. This included the encouragement for women to come to our TGIF by not charging them admission. At the time, no one ever thought of it as sex discrimination. Instead, it was a way to have a better social function. Past precedents of the college's pricing policies gave us no indication that what we did would offend anybody. Considering such events as floor parties which almost always include disproportionate pricing policies, the Senate's decision was one of practicality, not only for the Junior Class but the whole college. Why should the Junior Class have been held responsible for something that has always been accepted and, why should they be expected to change eight weeks of planning in less than twenty-four hours notice? The Senate took the stand that in the future this policy would not be allowed.